

EXHIBIT # 1
DATE 2-14-11
FILE 4/04

Madame Chair, Members of the Committee

My name is Gladys Hardin, H A R D I N

I speak to you today as President of The League of Women Voters of Montana in support of HB404..

The League of Women Voters has actively studied the role of the legislature in Montana State Government and the impact of term limits. Both LWVMontana and LWVUS have adopted a position in opposition to term limits. In 2008, led by the League of Women Voters of Bozeman, a study of the impacts of term limits was completed. We looked at five arguments in favor of term limits, and five against. The most notable conclusions were:

On the composition of legislatures:

1. There is higher turnover, but little change in composition
2. Members are less experienced
3. There is an acceleration of political ambition

On the behavior of legislators:

5. There is an increasing short term orientation, and a
6. Decline in specialization and expertise

On organizational matters:

7. There is a weakening of house vis-à-vis senate,
8. A weakening of top leadership,
9. A weakening of standing committees ,
10. A more difficult job for legislative staff
11. A more difficult job for lobbyists

On legislative performance:

13. There is a deterioration of lawmaking process,
14. Less study and deliberation,
15. A decreased role for minority party members ,
16. A weaker legislature vis-à-vis governor and executive departments and agencies, and
17. Diminished commitment by leaders and members to the legislature as an institution

In short, the stated objectives of the proponents of term limits have not been met.

Arguments by opponents, have in large part been borne out.

The legislature is a weaker institution because of term limits.

Limiting legislative terms by a date on a calendar has been

ineffective. By contrast, there is a tried and true system for limiting

terms. It is non partisan. It limited Republicans in 2008, and it limited Democrats in 2010. It is called the Voter. The League of Women Voters believes it is the fundamental right of voters to elect their representatives. Please vote yes on HB404 to repeal term limits on legislators.

Oppose HB418